

Avhandling från Institutionen för historiska studier i Göteborg

ÖSTERSJÖNS SKEPPSSÄTTNINGAR

Monument och mötesplatser under yngre bronsålder

with an English Summary

av
fil. mag. Joakim Wehlin

Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i arkeologi vid Göteborgs universitet som med tillstånd av humanistiska fakultetsnämnden kommer att offentligen försvaras fredagen den 15 mars, 2013, kl. 13.00 i sal T 302, Institutionen för filosofi, lingvistik och vetenskapsteori, Olof Wijksgatan 6, Göteborg.

Opponent:

Docent Mads Kähler Holst, Institut for Kultur og Samfund, Aarhus universitet

Betygsnämnd:

*Professor Joakim Goldhahn, Institutionen för kulturvetenskaper, Linnéuniversitetet
Professor Thomas Lindkvist, Institutionen för historiska studier, Göteborgs universitet
Docent Eva Hjärthner-Holdar, Riksantikvarieämbetet, UV:s geoarkeologiska
laboratorium, Uppsala*

Ordförande:

Professor Kristian Kristiansen, Institutionen för historiska studier, Göteborgs universitet



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

Abstract

Wehlin, J. (2012). Östersjöns skeppssättningar – monument och mötesplatser under yngre bronsålder / Baltic Stone Ships – monuments and meeting places during the Late Bronze Age. GOTARC Serie B. Gothenburg Archaeological Theses 59. Gothenburg. Pp. 393. Written in Swedish with an English summary. ISSN 0282-6860, ISBN 978-91-85245-51-8, e-publicerad: <http://hdl.handle.net/2077/31901>.

During the Late Bronze Age, the number of metal objects in the Baltic Sea region increased tremendously. Mobility and interaction in this northern inland sea intensified. This occurred in a period of prehistory when the ship was the predominant symbol in southern Scandinavia. The ship can be found in rock carvings, on bronze objects and by way of erected stone monuments: stone ship settings. These stone ships are mainly to be found in the Baltic Sea region, with a marked concentration on Gotland.

The stone ship settings and their landscape context are the focus of this dissertation. The objective is to clarify whether it is possible to find evidence of social groupings of people in the Nordic Late Bronze Age (1100-500 BC), by focusing on the stone ship monument, adopting a maritime approach. These people might have been part of a maritime institution specializing in trade and long distance journeys during this period, thus achieving a more advanced maritime way of life in the Baltic Sea. Are the ship settings an expression of these specific groups of people, who utilized their practices to position and articulate themselves in the landscape? If such maritime institutions can in fact be traced, there must also be uniformly structured locations for these groups of people to meet in, some kind of antecedents of harbours.

By taking an inland sea, the Baltic Sea, as a geographical demarcation, a different perspective of prehistory is attained. The area in the Late Bronze Age and earliest Iron Age (950/900-200 BC) differed from the Nordic Bronze Age sphere. The communities around the Baltic Sea, through the establishment and sharing of mutual interests, seem to have reached a certain degree of consensus. This concordance might well be largely explained by the complex dependency on metal. Such a manifestation would not have been possible without an infrastructure or network, in this case a maritime one. This is something which has previously been overlooked in discussions on the Bronze Age in the Baltic Sea.

Keywords: Ship settings, Stone ships, Burials, Burnt bones, Bronze Age, Pre-Roman Iron Age, Bornholm, Gotland, Latvia, Saaremaa, Åland, Baltic Sea, Maritime, Landscape, Seascape, Maritime institutions, Maritory.